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SUBJECT: Deputy Agriculture Minister Krisnamurthi Supports
Increased Engagement on Food Security

11. Summary. Ambassador Cameron Hume met with Dr. Bayu Krisnamurthi, Deputy Minister of the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture on December 1, 2009 to discuss cooperation on food security issues. Krisnamurthi supports the Secretary's new policies on food security, and sees agricultural cooperation as a way to strengthen the bilateral relationship, increase investment, and promote the use of GMOs. Krisnamurthi would like to set up a joint workshop on agricultural technology and meet the head of the U.S. delegation in the upcoming OECD meeting in Paris on December 7. End Summary.

Opportunity for the Bilateral Relationship

12. Dr. Krisnamurthi presented the Ambassador with a copy of an article from a major Indonesian newspaper that was a translation of Secretary Clinton's speech on Food Security presented in September at the U.N. Food Security Event. Dr. Krisnamurthi commented favorably on the contents of the speech, in particular the five principles, and expressed support for the new approach to address food security on a case by case basis, and not take a one-size-fits-all approach.

13. In the 1970s and 1980s, as many as 300 Indonesians received PhDs from U.S. Land Grant Universities under a USAID program, according to Krisnamurthi. He stressed that this program has been critical to Indonesia's food security and overall agricultural development over the decades, as the U.S.-trained scholars introduced new ideas and increased communication and "spoke the same language." Krisnamurthi maintained that the training program was also fundamental for the United States-Indonesia bilateral relationship.

Business Can Play a Role

14. The Ministry of Agriculture has identified investment in agricultural research as a top priority for President Yudhoyono's second term, according to Krisnamurthi. He also stressed the importance of investments in such areas as plant genetics, technology, and training of farmers and women. He indicated that the United States and Indonesia can work together in this area.

15. Dr. Krisnamurthi supports the wider use of technology

(including GMOs) in Indonesian agriculture. He stated that GMOs are "a good tool" to increase productivity in the short-to-medium terms, while "GMO-related health impacts are still unknown and long-term concerns". He plans to use his new position as the Deputy Minister to ease restrictions on biotechnology. He added that Indonesia cannot simply use the same rhetoric regarding biotechnology as it has in the past 30 years.

¶6. Ambassador Hume noted that fisheries should be an integral part of Indonesia's food security as fish products are an important element of the diet of the poor, and Krisnamurthi agreed.

Going Forward

¶7. Dr. Krisnamurthi suggested that the United States and Indonesia organize a joint workshop to address agricultural technology (including GMO) and investment in the Indonesian agricultural sector. He suggested that the workshop be open to public (including the press), private, and NGO stakeholders. Krisnamurthi proposed holding the workshop in Jakarta in early ¶2010. Ambassador Hume said that Post will get back to him with a proposal.

¶8. Krisnamurthi also asked to meet with the chair of the U.S. delegation to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Forum on Investment, Paris, France, December 7-8, ¶2009. Dr. Krisnamurthi is the Co-Chair for the session on promoting responsible international investment in agriculture and would like to meet with the U.S. representative during the

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forum.

¶9. Ambassador Hume committed to providing Indonesia with information on GMO that would support the Deputy Minister's initiatives. FAS Jakarta has already received information from FAS/W that it will provide to Dr. Krisnamurthi.

HUME